



Timber Committee
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



European Forestry Commission
Food and Agricultural Organization

UNECE / FAO Team of Specialists on
“Monitoring sustainable forest management”

REPORT
of the meeting of the Team of Specialists

Ispira, Italy, 26-28 January 2010

Item 1: Opening and welcome (UNECE/FAO Timber Section, JRC, FAO, MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo), arrangements for conducting the meeting, adoption of the Provisional Agenda.

1. Roman Michalak opened the meeting of the Team of Specialists (ToS), thanking the Joint Research Centre (JRC) for hosting the event before presenting the main objectives of the meeting. Meeting participants (list of participants is available in Annex 1) were welcomed by Harald Scholz from the Institute for Environment and Sustainability (JRC) and Simon Gillam, Team of Specialists Leader. Orjan Jonsson (FAO), Brad Smith (Montreal Process) and Berit Hauger Lindstad (Forest Europe Liaison Unit Oslo) addressed the meeting’s participants and informed them about recent progress related to global (FAO) and regional activities (Montreal Process and Forest Europe). The meeting’s provisional agenda and timetable were adopted with minor changes in the order of presentations (Annex 2)¹.

Item 2: Forest resources assessment and criteria and indicators related developments since the last meeting of the ToS on monitoring forest resources for SFM.

For this item, experts from several international organizations and various programmes informed the ToS participants on recent and future developments related to forest resources assessment in the UNECE region. The following presentations were delivered during this session:

- a. ToS process & developments – results from the first Joint TC/EFC Bureaux and the ToS leaders meeting; climate change issues and ideas to enhance cross-sectoral cooperation – Simon Gillam

¹ Presentations are available on UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber website at, <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=260>

- b. Report on the FRA 2010 Country reporting process and update on the Remote Sensing Survey – validation of country reports, internet based portal and pilot study – Orjan Jonsson
- c. Expert Level Meeting and Ministerial Conference 2011 – priorities, tasks and progress of work; consideration of a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe to strengthen cooperation on forests throughout Europe – Berit Hauger Lindstad (Forest Europe),
- d. Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators (C&I) – recent developments & World Forestry Congress – Brad Smith (USA),
- e. EU Cost Action E43 and new Cost Action – overview, achievements, and new methodology – Claude Vidal (ENFIN),
- f. Update on activities of the European Commission Joint Research Centre - Jesus San-Miguel-Ayanz (DG JRC),
- g. Update on activities of the DG ENV – outcome from the meeting in Uppsala - Michael Bucki (DG ENV),
- h. Update on activities of DG EUROSTAT Unit E3 – Environmental Statistics and Accounts – Csaba Mózes (DG Eurostat),
- i. Update on Streamlining Environmental Biodiversity Indicators 2010 process and other forest related activities by the European Environment Agency – Josef Herkendell (EEA)
- j. Report on activities of EFI - Aljoscha Requardt (EFI/European Forest Observatory)
- k. EUFORGEN – Overview and priorities – Jarkko Koskela (Bioversity International),

Item 3: Experience, relevance and effectiveness of the global variables and Criteria and Indicators as means of evaluation and communication SFM – opportunities and direction of future cooperation

This item provided information on similarities and differences between international reporting and internal national reporting experiences, and whether improvements could be made (i.e. more coherent overall system) to apply to all national users, partners and stakeholders.

Stein Tomter (Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute) presented interrelation among global, regional and national reporting on SFM. He gave an overview of the FAO thematic elements and Forest Europe criteria for SFM, presenting the possibilities for increasing consistency between the regional and global systems in the context of current and planned developments in the C&I related regional processes. He concluded some data from GFRA reporting could be used to pre-fill national reports. He advised pre-filled data should be checked stressing that when possible, extrapolated data should be replaced by real data.

Roman Michalak shared the results of the State of Europe Forests 2007 self-evaluation which was conducted during 2008-2009. These results will contribute to improving the quality and outreach of other outputs such as the reports on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

Brad Smith (US Forest Service) presented U.S. perspective and experiences on reporting on forests and forest management for different levels and purposes. He stressed on the complementary character of reporting at different levels, and the need to properly define the scale and amount of data collected. His presentation also included information about the quality and availability of data for reporting purposes.

Mark Gillis shared the Canadian experience of C&I processes, which reflects the country's federal system. The linkages between administration levels cover the whole structure of management and span from local through sub-national, national up to international levels. M. Gillis highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation with policy authorities, enhanced research and communication.

Helena Makela compared the Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO reporting process with the Finnish national reporting process (State of Finnish Forests) discussing the range of communication and outreach tools used in both processes to disseminate results. She concluded both types of reporting are valuable as they address different audiences. Basic reporting by indicators is important and unique but also technical and so has limited use. Thus, various reports are needed also for various audiences, e.g. professionals, public audiences, policy/decision makers and other sectors.

Claude Vidal shared the French experience on international reporting explaining some variations between international and national indicators. Data collected for GFRA often does not fit into national data requirements while indicators used for international reporting are not always suitable for national reporting. An information about enhanced C&I system developed in France that addresses this inconsistency and proposals for further C&I refinement and was presented for the workshop.

Simon Gillam presented the UK experience, which included use of reports prepared for international assessments (FRA and SoEF) for national purposes. Participants were informed about UK plans for developing new, national reporting tool, which structure refers to the pan-European indicators.

The second part of the item included breakout sessions. Participants were split into four groups to discuss and address the following questions:

- 1) How are the results (international and national) of Global FRA and regional indicators of SFM promoted and used in countries?
- 2) What aspects of SFM are important nationally and/or internationally, but are not adequately covered at present by this international reporting?
- 3) What else could be done, in countries or internationally, to make Global FRA and/or regional indicators of SFM more useful?

Results to question number one show that even though the FRA and SoEF are considered as best sources for international forest related information, knowledge about the C&I reports in countries is generally insufficient, mainly because of the lack of promotion at national level, and weak links to policy targets at international level. The groups also mentioned the insufficient coordination between the FRA and SoEF processes as a key factor to limiting consistent application of internationally collected data for national purposes.

The groups identified areas of SFM that are missing or not sufficiently addressed in current reports. The issues included wood supply availability, relevance of current

biodiversity indicators and inconsistency of international carbon reporting. The groups stressed the needs to improve socio-economic indicators (e.g. trade of wood products) and better address forest management at cross-sectoral level.

Finally, participants shared ideas on possible solutions to improve the current situation. The solutions included promoting the report at national and international levels and increasing cooperation among all contributors to the report (analysts, data providers) as well as evaluating users' needs. Finally participants highlighted the need to strengthen the verification process to ensure that reports reflect current political discussions and needs.

An edited summary of the group work is available in the Annex 3 to this report.

Item 4: Update on the advancement of the FAO global Forest Resources Assessment

Orjan Jonsson presented the latest developments in the final phase of FAO GFRA. The validation of the 233 Country reports for FRA 2010 was completed in early December 2009. The release of the Key Findings will be available in March. Participants were also briefed on the advancement and results of other FRA related activities including independent remote sensing survey. A new internet based portal for downloading data and uploading results was released at the end of 2009 for testing in the FRA 2010 Remote Sensing Survey. A letter was sent to National Correspondents (of countries with sample plots) asking them to help identify a suitable focal point for the FRA 2010 remote sensing survey.

Item 5: Increasing of understanding of reporting on policies, institutions and instruments for SFM

Participants were briefed on the methods and processes used under GFRA, Montreal Process and Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO for reporting on policies and institutions in the context of SFM. Policies variables are included in the GFRA 2010 enquiry while Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO collects policy information using a different format. Information about reporting on policies and institutions were delivered by Orjan Jonsson; Marion Briens briefed participants on the 2011 Pan-European Enquiry on Qualitative Indicators for SFM, explaining the structure and use of questionnaire for data collection. The results of this enquiry will be presented in the report State of Europe's Forests 2011. Brad Smith presented Montreal Process reporting on legal, institutional and economic frameworks as a separate criterion (7) which contents was recently revised.

Item 6: ToS input to the MCPFE/UNECE/FAO reporting on "State of Europe's Forests"

This item referred to the planning activities and preparations ongoing for the next report on the State of Europe's Forests (SoEF) which will be presented at the 6th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. Roman Michalak presented the results of preparatory work for the Forest Europe/UNECE/FAO reporting, including pilot application of the new European Forest Types and the enquiry on quantitative indicators on SFM.

Refinements of Forest Types

An extensive consultation process resulted in the refinement of the new European Forest Types (EFT). Reporting according to the new classification is carried out as a pilot implementation of the new European Forest Types, with specific rules for individual

indicators. All Forest Europe countries are asked to report on indicators 1.1 (forest area) and 1.2 (growing stock) according to the new forest types. Reporting on indicators 1.3 (age structure and/or diameter distribution), 4.1 (tree species composition), 4.3 (naturalness), 4.5 (deadwood) according to the new forest types that is ought to be of voluntary character. Reporting according to the old classification in parallel was considered unnecessary, and is not recommended, although it is recognised that this might result in some gaps in the reporting.

As recommended by the ToS at its previous meeting the concept of the category 14 (plantations or exotic tree species) and the countries' ability to report were subject to additional research. Anna Barbati presented the proposal on the final shape of the EFT classification (including category 14) and format for pilot reporting. Also discussed were the next steps of the reporting, in particular the organisation of a workshop to further discuss the results of the pilot application and related problem encountered during the process. The meeting recommended extending the reporting deadline by 'forest type' so that the workshop's conclusions are used in the reporting process.

Reporting on quantitative indicators

Roman Michalak informed participants that the Advisory Group on the preparation of the report recommended disseminating the enquiry on quantitative indicators by mid-February 2010. Furthermore data collection/validation process will be split into two parts – reporting through the national enquiry pre-filled with FRA 2010 and other sources, and validating information collected through international data providers (IDP). It was planned that pre-filled enquires would be delivered to countries in February, asking for country replies by May 2010. The process of IDP data validation would be carried out over summer 2010.

Information to be gathered through international data providers

Participants were briefed on the refinement of the verification procedure for the information collected through international data providers (Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.6, 4.7, 6.7, 6.8). Roman Michalak confirmed that those indicators were excluded from the main enquiry. It is assumed that data received from IDP is valid for use in the report's elaboration. However, to ensure maximum transparency, the data collected (Indicators 2.1, 2.3, 4.6, 6.7, 6.8) will be presented to national correspondents before it is used. Possible changes to should be brought up by the FRA and thematic IDP national correspondents, through the relevant international data provider. Data for indicators 2.2 and 4.7 is intended to be presented in a map format. These indicators are proposed to be excluded from the main enquiry; data will not be consulted with the national correspondents.

Experts representing international data providers presented the scope, status and plans relevant to all indicators of this Group. Information about forest health and vitality (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4) was delivered by Michael Koehl (ICP Forests) and Jesus San Miguel Ayanz (JRC Ispra). Aspects relevant to landscape pattern (4.6) were presented by Christine Estreguil (JRC Ispra). Jarkko Koskela (Bioversity International) informed participants about plans for reporting on genetic resources (4.7), while Alex McCusker (UNECE/FAO) presented status of reporting on wood consumption and trade (6.7, 6.8).

For indicators not included in the national enquiry, a separate set of “Reporting specifications for Indicators” which are to be covered by IDP, with attributes like the terms and definitions, rationale, explanatory notes, instructions, etc. will be compiled.

Information to be collected through national enquiry

ToS Team members and national correspondents were presented with the final version of the enquiry on the quantitative indicators. In addition, information on indicators for which source data will be collected from other organisations, was also provided. Considering the short period of time between global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 reporting and the launch of SoEF 2011, data collected for GFRA and other sources (Eurostat, JFSQ) will be used for the SoEF enquiry (questionnaires) to reduce reporting burden on countries. Further clarifications were provided in particular for reporting on protected forests and socio-economic indicators.

Roman Michalak presented the overall scope and structure of the enquiry. Structure, classifications, terms and definitions relevant to Criterion 1 (*Forest resources and their contribution to global Carbon cycles were presented*) by Roman Michalak, Criterion 2 (*Forest ecosystem health and vitality*) by Michael Koehl, Criterion 3 (*Productive functions of forests*) Alexander Korotkov, Criteria 4 and 5 (*Biological diversity in forest ecosystems and Protective functions in forest management*) by Stein Tomter, Criterion 6 (*Other socio-economic functions and conditions*) by Simon Gillam.

Due to the advancement of the process and the final stage of the elaboration of the enquiry, no major changes were proposed to the presented document. Discussions focused on clarifying the meaning of specific parts of the enquiry and clarifying explanatory notes. It was underlined that according to the current formula the report is about sustainable forest management, then it should focus on forest and other wooded land. Then it was suggested not to include information on other types of land use into the Enquiry. It was also observed the various time reference used in the report (annual, periodical, real forecasted) is problematic for comparative studies.

In the final part of the session ToS members and national correspondents were informed about plans for the next steps of the report’s production process. The enquiry will be updated according to the conclusions of discussion of the Team in Ispra. Two version of the enquiry will be prepared, one in Word and the second in Excel. Excel version will be pre-filled with data from GFRA2010 and other sources.

It was foreseen that validation of national reports will be completed by August/September 2010 in order to prepare data compilation, maps and graphs for report’s writers. The first draft of the report should be ready by the end of 2010; it is foreseen that national correspondents/ToS members would be given a possibility of commenting the draft. It is expected that the report will be published in line with the timeframe, to enable promotion and dissemination prior to the Oslo Conference.

Item 7: Special topic on health conditions of forests in the UNECE region, in the context of climate change – status and specific aspects related to inventory and reporting

Information on forest damage constitutes a substantial part in assessing the state of forests. Modules on forest damage evaluation are integrated in both global and regional forest reporting. In the context of climate change, the issue of forest conditions is likely to expand further particularly in terms of adaptation to new climate conditions. This item gave ToS members the opportunity to discuss their experiences on methods and processes used to report on forest health and condition.

Presentations of information on health conditions in USA and Canada (Mark Gillis and Brad Smith) and Russia (Andrey Filipchuk) included information on overall situation, the most severe events, and observed trends. The views from countries were complemented by information on regional reporting systems ICP Forests (Michael Koehl) and JRC Ispra (Jesus San Miguel Ayanz). The overview was completed by presentation of activities at the global level (Gillian Allard, FAO) which included information on preliminary results of reporting on forest disturbances for GFRA 2010.

The outcome from this item is expected to contribute to future international reporting arrangements and their ability for consistent presentations of information on health conditions in the region/countries, includes overall situation, the most severe events and reporting on forest damage over time (trends) in which different types of damage would be reported in a comparable way. Physical status of the forests, endangering factors and monitoring measures were issues presented during that session. These issues are expected to become extremely relevant notably because of climate change. It was suggested that a separate event should be organised to explore the issue in depth.

Item 8: Presentations on activities of the JRC Ispra and presentations from other ToS members.

JRC Ispra presented its forest related activities including a comparative analysis of forest area statistics in Europe and information on European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (Lucia Seebach). As a partner to the FRA 2010 Remote Sensing Survey (RSS), JRC explained the methods and processes used for estimating forest cover changes through remote sensing (Fernando Sedano). Pieter Kempeneers illustrated application of remote sensing techniques with a series of elaborated maps, including information on their accuracy. European Forest Data Center was presented by Gerimantas Gaigalas.

In the second part of the session Jarkko Koskela briefed the participants about the status and plans regarding European Information System on Forest Genetic Resources. Basic information about Canadian forest information system and its functionalities were presented by Mark Gillis.

Item 9: Plans for future activities of the ToS. Other matters.

Simon Gillam presented his views on the extent of progress made by the team and the next steps to take matters forward.

- a) Substantial progress has been made on EFTs, and we are now ready for pilot reporting. Next steps will be reporting by countries, a technical workshop in May 2010, followed by possible refinements in country reporting.

- b) Preparations have been made for SoEF reporting in 2010-2011, thanks to a small core team and comments from ToS members during the year and in the meeting, giving substantial improvements compared with the reporting process in 2006-2007. This will be taken forward by finalizing the questionnaire in early February 2010, country reporting and validation, and possible participation in a meeting in January 2011 to discuss the draft report.
- c) Members of the ToS are better informed, particularly about the work of JRC, but also other developments, through a large number of presentations. This will be taken forward by putting all presentations onto the website, but there are issues on how to communicate the contents more widely. For future ToS meetings, we should perhaps address fewer topics and consider each in more depth.
- d) The ToS meeting started to address the question of links between national reports at the global variables or regional indicators. The Montreal Process which guides country reporting was contrasted with the European process which compiles data and reports centrally. The ToS saw some good examples from European countries of national reporting on European C&I. It was not clear how to take this forward: should the ToS or FAO/UNECE help countries to promote national reporting of the indicators?

Simon Gillam reminded the ToS of the issues raised last year, and noted that little progress had been made.

- a) ToS have been kept informed about reporting on policies and institutions, but have not contributed much to the development,
- b) ToS membership still includes little experience in social and economic indicators,
- c) The ToS meeting included useful contributions from Montreal Process countries, but there are still problems with the agenda, with the whole of one day being devoted to European reporting.
- d) Despite the large meeting with over 40 participants, the ToS participants still gave a limited geographic scope. The 17 countries represented included welcome participation from Russia, but still had limited involvement from southern and eastern Europe.

Simon Gillam indicated several options for the next ToS meeting. He noted that SoEF reporting would be the topic of a separate meeting, so need not be considered at similar length by the next ToS meeting. The ToS meeting could be run immediately before/after the meeting on SoEF reporting in January 2011. Alternatively in 2011 ToS could hold a separate meeting, or it could be linked to some other international event. He also invited views on meetings in future years. There were no comments from ToS participants. The members were encouraged to submit views on the evaluation form, or by email to UNECE secretariat or team leader.

Item 10: Closure of the ToS meeting

The ToS members warmly thanked the Joint Research Centre Ispra for inviting and hosting the 2nd meeting of the ToS on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management. Special thanks were addressed to Dr. Jesus San Miguel Ayanz and his colleagues from the Institute for Environment and Sustainability for the exemplary organisation of the meeting and their exceptional hospitality.